



State of Connecticut

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STATE CAPITOL

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COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Labor and Public Employees
Public Testimony
Tuesday, February 24th, 2015

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 5079, AN ACT CONCERNING PREVAILING WAGE THRESHOLDS.

And

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 6250, PRIVATE CONTRIBUTIONS TO PUBLIC WORKS PROJECTS
AND THE PREVAILING WAGE STANDARD.

Good Evening Co-Chairs Senator Tercyak, Representative Winfield; Vice Chairs Senator Osten, Representative Cuevas; Ranking Members Senator Hwang and Representative Rutigliano; and esteemed members of the Committee. My name is Melissa Ziobron and I am proud to represent the 34th District, which encompasses the towns of East Hampton, East Haddam and part of Cokchester. I am testifying in support of a bill that I have proposed— HB 5079 and HB 6250.

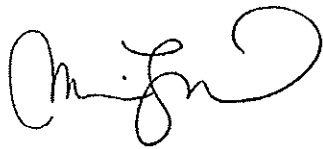
Our society is plagued by the implementation of outdated mandates and statutes. The natural order of laws and public acts is that they are to be regularly updated and checked. The Prevailing Wage Threshold has been at its current level since 1991. That is twenty-four years too long. It is possible that twenty-four years ago, it was an applicable and appropriate wage threshold. However, times have changed. Before PA 91-74 changed the prevailing wage, we as a legislative body had raised the wage threshold twice: once in 1979 and then again in 1985. The logic behind raising the threshold every few years was to adjust inflation and change in standard of living costs. There is a six year difference between 1979 and 1985, and then another six year difference in 1985 and 1979. Here we are twenty-four years later and we haven't increased the prevailing wage threshold once. I say it is way past time for that to change.

I was involved in the Prevailing Wage Subcommittee of the MORE Commission. It was a diverse group, with clear ideas from municipal leaders vs. union representatives. While we could not agree at a set rate, I did get the sense that they recognize something needs to be done. The union rep also introduced me to a concept I had not heard of before, which is the Massachusetts Sub Bid Law. I found that to be an interesting concept that might be an additional way for municipalities to control costs, which of course would benefit our taxpayers.

Lastly, if a generous private donor is willing to help defray the cost of a public works project they are doing our municipalities a great service. Having that amount included in the prevailing wage threshold does more harm to the project than good. Since technically, that money is not coming from a government organization I feel that it should be excluded from the calculation.

I urge you to increase prevailing wage threshold and allow for private funding be excluded from the threshold set by the state.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Ziobron', with a large, stylized loop at the end.

Melissa Ziobron
State Representative
34th District